AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 – 2 (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) The method defined in ~~claim 2~~ claim 19 including the step of sensing the amount of pressure of the ~~high pressure~~ pressurized air.

4. (Currently amended) The method defined in claim 3 including the step of stopping the ~~spaying~~ spraying of the bladder release lubricant upon the pressure of the ~~high pressure~~ pressurized air dropping below or rising above a predetermined amount.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently amended) The method defined in ~~claim 5~~ claim 19 including the step of stopping the ~~radial~~ movement of the air nozzle toward the splice whereby said nozzle is located adjacent a bead area of the green tire.

7. (Currently amended) The method defined in ~~claim 5~~ claim 19 including the step of providing the air nozzle with a pair of elongated spray orifices which extend generally between spaced beads of the tire.

8. (Currently amended) The method defined in ~~claim 2~~ claim 19 including the ~~steps~~ step of ~~inserting a pair of lubricant spray nozzles, generally axially into a central opening of the tire; and~~ rotating ~~said~~ the lubricant spray nozzle for spraying the lubricant onto the innerliner of the tire.

9. (Original) The method defined in claim 8 including the step of suspending the air nozzle in a fixed non-rotatable position below the lubricant spray nozzles.

Claims 10 – 16 (Canceled)

17. (New) A method of protecting a splice formed in an innerliner of a green tire from a bladder release lubricant being sprayed on the innerliner of the tire including the steps of:

inserting an air nozzle into a central opening of the tire;

moving the air nozzle radially within the tire opening toward the innerliner splice;

spraying the lubricant onto the innerliner of the tire; and

directing streams of pressurized air towards the sides of the splice during the step of spraying the lubricant onto the innerliner to create an air barrier to reduce the amount of sprayed lubricant contacting the splice.

18. (New) A method of protecting a splice formed in an innerliner of a green tire from a bladder release lubricant being sprayed on the innerliner of the tire including the steps of:

inserting a lubricant spray nozzle generally axially into a central opening of the tire;

rotating said lubricant spray nozzle and spraying the lubricant onto the innerliner of the tire; and

directing streams of pressurized air against the innerliner of the tire on both sides of the splice during the step of spraying the lubricant onto the innerliner to create an air barrier to reduce the amount of sprayed lubricant contacting the splice.

19. (New) A method of protecting a splice formed in an innerliner of a green tire from a bladder release lubricant being sprayed on the innerliner of the tire including the steps of:

inserting an air nozzle and a lubricant spray nozzle into a central opening of the tire;

moving the air nozzle toward the innerliner splice;

spraying the lubricant onto the innerliner of the tire; and

directing streams of pressurized air towards the splice during the step of spraying the lubricant onto the innerliner to create an air barrier to reduce the amount of sprayed lubricant contacting the splice.